



**PHIL CONNORS' SEARCH FOR MEANING IN
*GROUNDHOG DAY***

A THESIS

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Bachelor Degree Majoring American Studies in English Department
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer honestly confirms that he compiles this thesis by himself and without taking any results from any researchers in S-1, S-2, S-3, and in diploma degree of any university. The writer ascertains also that he did not quote other publications or someone else paper except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, 6 June 2018

Erizal Mahardhika

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“In the blazing midday of the mourning. I watch the world fall apart. There’s nothing better to do than just look and sit still.”

- **Bam Mastro**, *Hilang*

“I believe I can see the future. ‘Cause I repeat the same routine.”

- **Trent Reznor (Nine Inch Nails)**, *Everyday Is Exactly the Same*

“Do I really look like a guy with a plan?”

- **The Joker**

This thesis is dedicated to my grandparents.

APPROVAL

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DAY MOVIE**

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The writer realizes that this thesis is still far from perfection. Therefore, he will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this thesis better.

Finally, the writer expects that this thesis will be useful to the reader who wishes to learn something about existential vacuum and the meaning of life.

Semarang, 6 July 2018

Erizal Mahardhika

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ABSTRAK

Film *Groundhog Day* yang disutradarai oleh Harold Ramis menggambarkan pencarian makna hidup manusia. Film ini menceritakan tentang Phil Connors seorang peramal cuaca yang terjebak dalam sebuah *time loop* ketika ditugaskan untuk meliput acara tahunan *Groundhog Day* di Punxsutawney. Tujuan dari skripsi ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan aspek intrinsik yang meliputi aspek naratif dan sinematografi pada film *Groundhog Day* dan menjelaskan tentang aspek ekstrinsik yang mencakup *existential vacuum* dan pencarian makna hidup yang tercermin dalam karakter Phil Connors dengan menggunakan teori *existential vacuum* dan *logotherapy* Viktor Frankl. Penulis menggunakan metode penelitian pustaka dalam pengumpulan data. Untuk menganalisis aspek intrinsik penulis menggunakan pendekatan formalis. Adapun pendekatan psikologi digunakan untuk menganalisa aspek ekstrinsik. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Phil Connors mengalami *existential vacuum* dan melalui tiga cara untuk menemukan makna hidup, yaitu melalui berkarya, merasakan cinta, dan menerima nasib.

Kata kunci: *existential vacuum*, makna hidup, psikologi, *logotherapy*.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Frankl said in *Man's Search for Meaning*, "they lack the awareness of a meaning worth living for. They are haunted by the experience of their inner emptiness, a void within themselves; they are caught in that situation which I have called the "existential vacuum"" (2006: 105-106). The explanation told us that existential vacuum is a condition in which people find that nothing is worth living for. They find that their life is meaningless. The term that is coined by Frankl is similar to existential nihilism, Crosby said in *The Specter of the Absurd*,

The existential nihilist judges human existence to be pointless and absurd. It leads nowhere and adds up to nothing. It is entirely gratuitous, in the sense that there is no justification for life, but also no reason not to live. Those who claim to find meaning in their lives are either dishonest or deluded. In either case, they fail to face up to the harsh reality of the human situation (1988: 30).

From the statement above, it can be concluded that existential nihilist also finds that nothing is worth living for. They find that life is full of suffering, so nothing really matters, and the only feasible way to live this life and avoid suffering is the suppression of the will to live. Those traits are similar to Frankl's conception of existential vacuum.

Logotherapy, a theory which was invented by Viktor E. Frankl, a psychiatrist and a survivor of Nazi Death camps, can provide a solution to existential vacuum. In *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl said, "yet in

logotherapy the patient is actually confronted with and reoriented toward the meaning of his life. And to make him aware of this meaning can contribute much to his ability to overcome his neurosis” (2006: 98). Frankl through Logotherapy tries to help people overcome this condition called existential vacuum by encouraging people to seek the meaning of their life. The meaning of life is always present in all kinds of conditions. Frankl said “we must never forget that we may also find meaning in life even when confronted with a hopeless situation, when facing a fate that cannot be changed” (2006: 112). From the statement above, it is stated that whether in happiness or suffering, the meaning of life never ceases to exist.

The writer chooses an American movie entitled *Groundhog Day* as the object of this thesis because the film shows us the main character experience of existential vacuum and the ways he goes through to overcome it. *Groundhog Day* is directed by Harold Ramis. The movie was produced by Harold Ramis and Trevor Albert, distributed by Columbia Pictures. It was released on February 12, 1993. *Groundhog Day* is a drama movie that portrays a TV weatherman during an assignment covering the annual Groundhog Day event in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. During his visit, he finds himself trapped in a time loop, reliving the same day again and again. As a result, he wallows in hedonism and commits suicide multiple times. After finding that those things lead to nothing, he begins re-examine his life. The writer focuses on the main character’s existential vacuum and what he does to prevail over it.

1.2 Scope of the Study

In order to make this thesis more focused, the writer has to make some limitations. Firstly, the writer analyzes the intrinsic aspect of *Groundhog Day*. The intrinsic aspect that is used in this thesis consists of narrative and cinematic elements. Secondly, the writer analyzes the extrinsic aspect of the movie, using Frankl's theory of existential vacuum and logotherapy. Phil Connors as the main character of the movie becomes the only focus of the writer because his experience of existential vacuum and his search of meaning are the central topic of the movie.

1.3 Aim of the Study

In order to achieve the goals of this thesis, the writer arranged the aim of the study. The goals of this thesis are:

1. To analyze the intrinsic aspects of *Groundhog Day*
2. To analyze Phil Connors' existential vacuum that is shown in the movie *Groundhog Day*
3. To analyze Phil Connors' ways to find meaning that is shown in *Groundhog Day*

1.4 Method of the Study

In this thesis, the writer uses method of the study to get a proper way to analyze the object of this thesis. Method of the study consists of two methods. They are method of data collection and method of data analysis.

1.4.1 Method of Data Collection

To collect the data that is necessary to support to analysis, the writer uses library research in this thesis. The writer collects the data by watching the movie and obtains data that are related with this thesis from books and the internet.

1.4.2 Method of Data Analysis

Method of data analysis is used by the writer to dig deeper and analyze the main idea of the object that may be implicitly presented. There are two approaches used to analyze the object of this thesis, which are formalist and psychological approach. In *Film Theory and Approaches to Criticism or, What did the movie mean?*, Jacobs says “a formalist approach looks at the film itself, its structure and form. Thus, while other approaches often use some degree of external evidence to analyze a film, a formalist approach will focus primarily on internal evidence”. Formalist approach is used by the writer in this thesis to analyze the intrinsic aspect. It deals with intrinsic aspect which consists of narrative elements and cinematic elements. Narrative elements consist of theme, character, setting, and conflict. Meanwhile, cinematic elements consist of camera distance, sound, and *mise-en-scene*. Psychological approach is used by the writer for the extrinsic aspect. Frankl’s theory of existential vacuum and logotherapy are used to identify and analyze the existential problem and the way to overcome it that is described in the movie *Groundhog Day*.

1.5 Organization of the Study

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the study, scope of the study, aim of the study, method of the study, and organization of the study.

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS OF *GROUNDHOG DAY*

In this chapter, the writer describes the synopsis of *Groundhog Day*.

CHAPTER 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides theoretical framework of the thesis in order to support the study. The theoretical framework consists of intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the movie.

CHAPTER 4 PHILL CONNORS' SEARCH FOR MEANING IN GROUNDHOG DAY MOVIE

In this chapter, the writer describes and analyzes intrinsic aspects and extrinsic aspects of the movie *Groundhog Day*.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the discussion of this thesis.

REFERENCES

CHAPTER 2

SYNOPSIS OF *GROUNDHOG DAY*

Groundhog Day is a movie that tells the story of Phil Connors, a TV weatherman from Pittsburgh and his experience during an assignment in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, covering the annual Groundhog Day event. Phil Connors as a weatherman reassures the viewers that an approaching storm will not hit western Pennsylvania. He is assigned to cover the Groundhog Day event in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania with a new news producer, Rita Hanson, and a cameraman, Larry. Phil hates this assignment, he has already done it many times and this is the last before his retirement. Phil openly expresses his hate towards the town and the inhabitants, even calling them “hicks”.

They arrive in Punxsutawney before Groundhog Day and stay there for a night. Phil and his colleagues stay at different bed and breakfasts, initially Phil is afraid that he will stay at the same bed and breakfast that Rita and Larry stay in, because he hates that place. The next morning, Phil awakes at his bed and breakfast to Sonny & Cher’s “I Got You Babe” on the clock radio. He and his colleagues go to the gathering where people gather to see Punxsutawney Phil, a groundhog that will give a weather forecast. Phil half-heartedly does this assignment and wants to go home as soon as possible. After covering the annual event, they go home, but on their way they caught in traffic jam. It turns out that the road is closed because the storm blankets the region in snow, so they are stranded in Punxsutawney. Phil is terribly irritated by this and retires to bed early.

The next day, Phil wakes at his bed and breakfast to the same song and announcement from the radio. He meets same people in the same sequence and he realizes that he is reliving the same day again. Initially, he thinks that it is just a dream and he returns to bed, but the next day he wakes up to the same song, announcement, and meets the same people again. Phil finds that he is trapped in a time loop and he is bewildered by this. Phil is intrigued when he finds that whatever he does have no consequences because he simply wakes up the next day, which is the same day he has lived yesterday. After realizing this, Phil begins to abuse his freedom. He drives recklessly, eats excessively, drinks a lot, and commits promiscuity.

After a while, Phil gets bored by his mundane activities. He becomes depressed and tries to escape the time loop by committing suicide so many times, but he keeps waking up the next day and reliving it again. Phil tries to seek help from Rita. He tells Rita his condition by precisely predicting the day's events. Rita thinks that Phil is joking and does not take him seriously initially, but more and more events are accurately predicted by Phil, so Rita is intrigued and starts to take sympathy. She spends a day together with Phil and begins to like him. She stayed at Phil's room until midnight thinking something will happen, but nothing is happen, so they go to sleep. The next day, Phil wakes up alone as usual. Starting from that day, Phil uses his knowledge to help the residents of Punxsutawney and to better himself. He takes piano lesson, learns ice sculpting, and speaks French. He even tries to prevent the death of a homeless man so many times to no avail and learn the truth that death is inevitable.

During one loop, Phil reports the Groundhog Day event with such enthusiasm. He realizes that even though he cannot escape the time loop, he is surrounded by the warm and friendly Punxsutawney residents, so he accepts his fate and makes peace with it. After that, Phil and Rita spend the rest of the day together, Rita is impressed by how different Phil's attitude now. Phil impresses her more by making an ice sculpture of Rita's face. He tells her that no matter what happens, even if he has to live the same day over and over again, he finally finds happiness, because he loves her. They spend the rest of the night in Phil's room. The next morning, Phil wakes up to the same song again, but finds that Rita is still beside him. He realizes that he has finally escaped the time loop and decides to live in Punxsutawney with Rita.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Intrinsic Aspect

In the third chapter, the writer will explain intrinsic aspect first. The intrinsic aspect consists of two elements, which are narrative and cinematography elements. The importance of intrinsic aspect is to understand the elements that can be found in the movie itself, so the reader can easily understand how the movie is portrayed.

3.1.1 Narrative Elements

The first element of intrinsic aspect that will be discussed is narrative elements.

According to Benyahia on *AS Film Studies: The Essential Introduction*:

Narratives can be seen as particular arrangements of events within a structure. This structure may be the simplest one of relating events in chronological order, or might be more complex. It could, for instance, involve the use of parallel episodes that form a deliberate contrast to each other, or the repetition of events seen from different perspectives, or the integration of symbolic events or images used in order to create significance (2006: 45).

From the explanation, it can be concluded that the function of narrative elements is to make a story integrated. In the case of movies, it helps the audience to comprehend the storyline of a movie, so the audience does not get confused, because there is coherence in the movie. Moreover, Abrams says “In drama, the narrative is not told, but evolves by the means of the direct presentation on stage of the actions and speeches of the characters” (1999: 173). In a sense, the way the

story narrated in drama is quite similar to movie. The audience has to understand and interpret the story using the own perception.

Furthermore, narrative elements consist of theme, character, setting, plot, and conflict. However, the writer only explains theme, character, setting, and conflict in this thesis.

3.1.1.1 Theme

Theme is the main idea that presented in a movie or other imaginative works.

According to Abrams in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*,

Theme is sometimes used interchangeably with “motif”, but the term is more usefully applied to a general concept or doctrine, whether implicit or asserted, which an imaginative work is designed to incorporate and make persuasive to the reader (1999: 170).

From the explanation above, it is stated that theme can be found inside an imaginative work whether implicitly or explicitly presented.

3.1.1.2 Character

The next element beside theme is character. Character in a movie or other imaginative works is used to advance the story. Other than that, character can also be used to present the message or the main idea of the story. Abrams says in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*:

Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it—the dialogue—and from what they do—the action (1999:33).

From the statement above, it is said that character through dialogue or action is represented with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities which define the character. Moreover, there are two types of character. Character is divided into flat and round character, respectively. Below is the explanation of flat and round character.

A flat character (also called a type, or “two dimensional”), Forster says, is built around “a single idea or quality” and is presented without much individualizing detail and therefore can be fairly adequately described in a single phrase or sentence. A round character is complex in temperament and motivation and is represented with subtle particularity; such a character therefore is as difficult to describe with any adequacy as a person in real life, and like real persons, is capable of surprising us (Abrams, 1999: 33).

It can be concluded that flat character can be distinguished from round character by the way the character built and presented. A flat character usually built around a single quality or idea and lack of depth. Meanwhile, a round character usually presented with complexity and depth. Furthermore, character can be divided into two more categories. They are major character and minor character.

3.1.1.2.1 Major Character

Major character usually also known as main character is a character that becomes the center of attention in the story of a movie or other imaginative works. Major character appears on-screen more often than minor character. Moreover, Richard Barsam and Dave Monahan in *Looking at Movies: An Introduction to Film* said

Major character, the most important characters to the plot, make the most things happen or have the most things happen to them. Because plot

depends on conflict, major characters—male or female—are often described as protagonists and antagonists (2010: 135).

From the statement above, it can be concluded that major character is the most important character that appear frequently and become the center of attention. Major character also can be divided into two types based on their role. They are protagonists and antagonists.

3.1.1.2.2 Minor Character

The next type of character is minor character. Minor character in contrast to major character appears less often in the story. Therefore, minor character is less prominent than major character. According to Barsam and Monahan,

Minor characters play a less important role in the overall movie, functioning usually as a means of moving the plot forward or of fleshing out the motivations of the major characters (2010: 136).

It can be concluded from the statement above that minor character only plays a supportive role, which is less important than the role that played by main character. However, its supportive role is necessary to the development of the story and the main character.

3.1.1.3 Setting

Setting is another important element of narrative elements. The general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which the action occurs is the overall setting of a narrative or dramatic works (Abrams, 1999: 284). According to Holman in *A Handbook to Literature*,

The elements which go to make up a setting are: (1) the actual geographic location, its topography, scenery, and such physical arrangements as the location of the windows and doors in a room; (2) the occupations and daily manner of living of the characters; (3) the time or period in which the action takes place, e.g., epoch in history or season the year; (4) the general environment of the characters, e.g., religious, mental, moral, social, and emotional conditions through which the people in the narrative move (1960: 413).

From the statement above, it can be concluded that setting is the background with all its aspects in which a story takes place. The writer also divides setting into three types; setting of time, setting of place, and setting of social environment. Setting of time is the time or period, setting of place is the actual location, and setting of social environment is the general condition of the society or people in which the story takes place.

3.1.1.4 Conflict

Conflict is crucial to the development of the story of a movie or other imaginative works. The element of suspense and interest in any form of fiction is provided by conflict. It is the clash between two opposing forces in a plot (Holman, 1960: 98).

Below are two different kinds of conflict according to Howard and Mabley.

From *North by Northwest* to *Star Wars* to *Chinatown* to *Terminator*, very effective films has been made from stories in which the protagonist and antagonist are clearly and distinctly different people in active opposition to each other. In this sort of a story, the protagonist has what is called an external conflict, a conflict with someone else. But in a great many films the protagonist is his or her own antagonist as well: the central struggle is within the main character, two parts or desires or urges of the same person (1995: 25).

It is stated above that there are two different kinds of conflict based on the source of force that clashed with the character, which are external and internal conflict, respectively. External conflict happens between a character and an

external force. The external force is not limited to the antagonist. It can be a person, nature, or just about anything. Meanwhile, internal conflict is a conflict that happened because of the struggle of a character against an internal force. Usually, it happens when a character encounters a dilemma while trying to make an important decision.

3.1.2 Cinematic Elements

The second element of intrinsic aspect that will be discussed is cinematic elements. Below is the description of cinematography according to Barsam and Monahan.

Cinematography is the process of capturing moving images on film or a digital storage device. The word comes to us from three Greek roots—kinesis, meaning “movement”; photo, meaning “light”; and graphia, meaning “writing”—but the word was coined only after motion pictures themselves were invented (2010: 208).

From the statement above, the writer concluded that cinematography is all aspects that are visualized in a movie with the purpose of depicting a story of a movie through scenes. In this thesis, cinematic elements consist of camera distance, sound, and mise-en-scene, respectively. The writer chooses to describe those three aspects because they represent how *Groundhog Day* is portrayed.

3.1.2.1 Camera Distance

Camera distance is one of cinematography elements which function is to establish images that will be shown in a movie. Bordwell and Thompson said that other than a certain angle and height and on a level plane or at a cant, the framing of the image also stations us at a certain distance. A sense of being close or far away to

the mise-en-scene of the shot is supplied by framing (1997: 190). Moreover, according to Benyahia in *AS Film Studies: The Essential Introduction*,

The filmmaker also has within her control the manipulation of our physical point of view through camerawork. The filmmakers can put us into positions that are comfortable or uncomfortable, dominant or weak, simply by deciding on the positioning and movement of the camera (2006: 31).

From the statement above, it can be concluded that filmmakers use camera distance to manufacture a scene with a certain quality that able to manipulate our perception. We can feel many so different things just by looking at it. Barsam and Monahan in *Looking at Movies: An Introduction to Film* divide camera distance into seven different shots (2010). There are extreme long shot, long shot, medium long shot, medium shot, medium close-up, close-up, and extreme close-up.

3.1.2.1.1 Extreme long shot

Extreme long shot is shot at enormous distance from the subject, that subject is frequently too tiny to be recognized, except through the context we see, which usually includes a vast view of a place, as well as general background information (Barsam & Monahan, 2010: 232). Extreme long shot is the type of shot that can cover an extremely wide view of a particular location that is being used as a background.



Picture 3.1

3.1.2.1.2 Long Shot

In the long shot, the background still dominates the shot, but the subject shows more prominence (Brodwell & Thompson, 1997: 191). In this type of shot, we can still see the dominance of the background, but we can also see that the subject is depicted clearer in this type of shot compared to extreme long shot.



Picture 3.2

3.1.2.1.3 Medium Long Shot

Medium long shot is a hybrid. It is somewhere between long shot and medium shot. In medium long shot the subject is usually portrayed from the knees up, as well as some of the background and it is used to portray one or more characters (Barsman & Monahan, 2010: 233).



Picture 3.3

3.1.2.1.4 Medium Shot

Medium shot provides the detail of the subject more than the long shot. It replicates our human experience of proximity without intimacy which makes it the most frequently used type of shot. This type of shot shows a character, usually from the waist up, or her full figure if she is seated (Barsam & Monahan, 2010: 234).



Picture 3.4

3.1.2.1.5 Medium Close-Up

Medium close-up is a type of shot that portrays a subject from the chest to the top of the head. A view of the face that catches minor changes in expression and some detail about the character's posture are provided by this type of shot (Barsam & Monahan, 2010: 234).



Picture 3.5

3.1.2.1.6 Close-Up

Close up is a type of shot that is taken at a very close proximity to the subject. Traditionally, it is used to show full head, but it can also be used to show a hand, eye, or mouth (Barsam & Monahan, 2010: 234).



Picture 3.6

3.1.2.1.7 Extreme Close-Up

Extreme close-up is a type of shot that is taken at an extremely close range to the subject, even closer than a close-up. According to Sikov, “an extreme close-up might be of the person’s eyes-or mouth-or nose-or any element isolated at very close range in the image” (2009).



Picture 3.7

3.2 Extrinsic Aspect

Extrinsic aspect deals with the problem and the ways the main character of *Groundhog Day* has to endure and go through in his search for the meaning of life. Logotherapy theory by Viktor E. Frankl names existential vacuum as an existential problem, which is a feeling of the total and ultimate meaninglessness of life (2006: 105). Meanwhile, also in logotherapy theory by Viktor E. Frankl the ways to find the meaning of life are through creating a work or doing a deed, experiencing something or encountering someone, and the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering (2006: 111).

3.2.1 Frankl's Existential Vacuum

Existential vacuum is a situation in which man haunted by the experience of their inner emptiness, a void within themselves (Frankl, 2006: 106). Frankl said:

The existential vacuum is a widespread phenomenon of the twentieth century. This is understandable; it may be due to a twofold loss which man has had to undergo since he became a truly human being. At the beginning of human history, man lost some basic animal instincts in which an animal's behavior is imbedded and by which it is secured. Such security, like Paradise, is closed to man forever; man has to make choices (2006: 106).

From the quote above, we can assume that mankind is condemned to be free. We live by choices and this kind of freedom can make confusion. Moreover, sometimes man does not even know what he wishes to do, no instinct tells him what he has to do, and no traditions tells him what he ought to do. Man either wishes to do what other people do (conformism) or he does what other people wish him to do (totalitarianism) (Frankl, 2006: 106). In *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl said "The existential vacuum manifests itself mainly in a state of boredom" (2006: 106). As an example, "Sunday neurosis", that type of despair which afflicts people who become aware of the emptiness of their lives when the rush of the hectic weekday is over and the emptiness within themselves becomes manifest. There are a lot of suicide cases that can be traced back to this existential vacuum. The existential vacuum is the reason that underlies such widespread phenomena as depression, aggression, and addiction (Frankl, 2006: 107). Furthermore, the existential vacuum appears in many other guises. Sometimes the frustrated will to meaning is replaced by a will to power, as well as the oldest form of the will to power, the will to money. The place of frustrated will to meaning is also taken by the will to pleasure in some other cases. That is the reason why existential vacuum sometimes lead to the increase of sex drive. (Frankl, 2006: 107). The existential vacuum is a very common circumstance nowadays, the feeling of emptiness or void always haunts our modern society. Workers are bored by their routine, retirees and elderlies got nothing to do, those are just some examples of people that are susceptible to existential vacuum. Boredom is the most common form in which existential vacuum usually

manifests, but it can also manifest itself in other forms. The will to pleasure and the will to power usually take the place of frustrated will to meaning. People are drenched in consumerism, practicing sexual promiscuity, doing drugs, or eating excessively. These are just forms of an attempt to fill their inner void, to escape from existential vacuum, but these attempts lead to nothing because their will to meaning is still frustrated.

3.2.2 Frankl's Logotherapy

Logotherapy is the name of a theory developed by Viktor E. Frankl, a survivor of Nazi death camps and a psychiatrist. The term is derived from *logos*, a Greek word which means "meaning." Logotherapy, which some authors call as The Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy, focuses on the human existence meaning and the search for life meaning. In logotherapy, the struggle to find life meaning is the main driving force in man. This conception is a nod to the will to meaning and a contrast to Freudian will to pleasure, as well as Adlerian will to power (Frankl, 2006: 98-99). Frankl said in *Man's Search for Meaning*:

Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life and not a "secondary rationalization" of instinctual drives. This meaning is unique and specific in that it must and can be fulfilled by him alone; only then does it achieve a significance which will satisfy his own will to meaning (2006: 99).

The meaning of life differs from man to man, day to day, and from hour to hour. Therefore, the meaning of life in general is not important, what matters is the specific meaning of a person's life at a given moment (Frankl, 2006: 108). Frankl said that man have to actualize the potential meaning of his life and also

responsible for it. He stressed that the real life meaning should not be discovered within man or his mind like a closed system, but it has to be discovered in the world (2006: 110). Logotherapy encourages man to forget about himself and giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love, in order to actualize himself. In his book *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl said:

I have termed this constitutive characteristic “the self transcendence of human existence.” It denotes the fact that human always points, and is directed, to something or someone, other than oneself—be it a meaning to fulfill or another human being to encounter (2006: 110).

Self-actualization is necessarily only as a side-effect of self-transcendence.

What is known as self-actualization is actually not an attainable aim at all, because the more one craves for it, the more he would miss it (Frankl, 2006: 110).

3.2.2.1 The Sources of Life Meaning

Every kinds of situation in life present a problem for him to solve and a challenge to man, the life meaning question may actually be reversed. Man must recognize that it is he who is asked and he should not ask what his life meaning is. Every man is questioned by life and he is the only one who can answer and responsible for what is the meaning of his life (Frankl, 2006: 109). In his book *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl said:

According to logotherapy, we can discover this meaning of life in three different ways: (1) by creating a work or doing deed; (2) by experiencing something or encountering someone; and (3) by the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering (2006: 111).

The first way to find life meaning is by creating or doing something. The second way is by experiencing something or encountering someone. The third

way is by taking the attitude toward unavoidable suffering. Through those ways stated above, man may find the meaning of his life.

3.2.2.1.1 Creating a Work or Doing Deed

Creating a work or doing deed is the first way that man can take to find the meaning of life. The abstract life meaning should not be searched by man. Man has his own specific mission in life or vocation which demands fulfillment. Everyone's task is as unique as his specific opportunity to implement it. He cannot be replaced and his life cannot be repeated (Frankl, 2006: 108-109). People can find meaning in whatever kinds of work and this is very subjective, since everybody has his own uniqueness. A musician may find meaning in playing or composing music, an athlete may find meaning in doing some sort of sport, and a writer may find meaning in writing something.

3.2.2.1.2 Experiencing Something or Encountering Someone

The second way to find the meaning of life is by experiencing something or encountering someone. The meaning of life can be learned from human interaction, man can always learn something from what they experience. The only way to know another man in the innermost core of his personality is through love. Another human being very essence cannot become fully known unless one loves him (Frankl, 2006: 111). By experiencing love, man can go through almost anything. A man may endure suffering for the one he loves. For example, a father works and makes money for his children. His love for his children gives him a "why" for him to live.

3.2.2.1.3 The Attitude toward Unavoidable Suffering

The third way to find the meaning of life is by choosing an attitude toward unavoidable suffering. The main concern of man is not to avoid pain or to gain pleasure, but to find his life meaning. In that case, man must be ready to suffer, on the condition, to be sure, that his suffering has a meaning (Frankl, 2006: 113). When facing an unavoidable suffering or when confronted with a hopeless situation, man must never forget that he may also find meaning in his life. What matters is to transform a suffering into a triumph or to turn one's predicament into a human achievement. We are challenged to change ourselves when we are no longer able to change a situation (Frankl, 2006: 112). By seeing our suffering from a different perspective man may find meaning in his suffering. Suffering ceases being a suffering, when man finds meaning in it. For example, a man finds meaning after the death of his wife, because he knows that the death spares his wife the grief she might experience if she stays alive and he is the one who dies first.

CHAPTER 4

PHIL CONNORS' SEARCH FOR MEANING IN *GROUNDHOG DAY*

DAY MOVIE

4.1 Intrinsic Aspect

4.1.1 Theme

Groundhog Day is an American movie that tells the story of Phil Connors and his search for life meaning. Thus, the search for life meaning appears as the theme of the movie. Phil Connors, a TV weatherman, is stranded in a town called Punxsutawney during his assignment to cover the Groundhog Day. It turns out that not only he is stranded in the town but he is also trapped in a time loop and has to relive the same day over and over again.



Picture 4.1
00:30:30



Picture 4.2
00:30:34

After sometimes, Phil is getting frustrated by his condition. Those two pictures above shows Phil asking to two townsmen about what would they do if they are experiencing his condition. He wants to know the meaning of his existence, because it seems that nothing really matters. Phil tries to overcome his condition with pursuing pleasure which leads to no avail. He even tries to kill himself so many times, but whatever he does, it is all does not matter, he will

wake up the next day reliving the same day again. Those two pictures above were taken by using medium close-up shot to show the facial expression of Phil Connors that depicts his frustration of his meaningless life. From those pictures and the explanation above, we can conclude that the main idea or theme of the movie is the search for life meaning.

4.1.2 Character

4.1.2.1 Major Character

4.1.2.1.1 Phil Connors

Phil Connors is the main character in this movie. The whole story follows his experience in Punxsutawney. Phil Connors is a weatherman, he is a charming and funny man on camera, but once he's off camera it is very obvious that he is a resentful and obnoxious sarcastic person.



Picture 4.3
00:02:03



Picture 4.4
00:12:57

There are two pictures above. The first picture that was taken by using medium shot shows Phil and his colleague presenting a weather forecast. Phil looks charming and professional as a weatherman while on camera. Meanwhile, the later which was taken by using medium close-up shot shows Phil insults people of Punxsutawney in front of Rita. He calls them “hicks”, because he thinks

that people of Punxsutawney are somewhat unsophisticated and less intelligent compared to him. In fact, he thinks that everybody else is inferior to him.

Phil Connors really hates when he is assigned to report the Groundhog Day and he is not shy displaying his disdain of Punxsutawney and the townsmen. Below is the example of a dialogue in which Phil shows his hatred of those he deemed inferior to him.

Mrs. Lancaster	: I hope you enjoy the festivities.
Phil	: I'm sure I will.
Mrs. Lancaster	: There is talk of a blizzard.
Phil	: We may catch a break and it will blow right by. The moisture coming out of the south by midday will push on to the east. At high altitudes it'll crystallize and gives us what we call snow. Our high will get to about 30 today, teens tonight. Chance of precipitation, about 20 percent today, 20 percent tomorrow. Did you want to talk about the weather or just chitchat?
Mrs. Lancaster	: Chitchat.

(*Groundhog Day* (1993), 00:09:20 – 00:09:52)

The dialogue above shows how Phil treats Mrs. Lancaster. He responds Mrs. Lancaster with cynicism and acts cocky despite her hospitality. Phil considers Mrs. Lancaster as an inferior person. She attempts to do chitchat with him, instead of responding with friendly attitude he brags his capability as a professional weatherman. He uses terminologies that Mrs. Lancaster does not understand, so he will look superior to her. Phil is also a selfish person that only concerned about his very own pleasure. This attitude is shown in these pictures below.



Picture 4.5
00:33:47



Picture 4.6
00:38:16

The first picture that was taken by using medium close-up shot shows Phil driving recklessly around Punxsutawney. It is after he realizes that he is trapped there in Groundhog Day and has to relive the same day again and again with no consequences for his action, because he will wake up the next day and reliving the same day again. Phil abuses his freedom to do whatever he likes with no regards to anything. He drives the car along the railroad and almost rams an incoming train, because he does not want live by the law anymore. The later that was taken by using medium shot shows Phil asks a woman her name, her school, and her personal information. This knowledge is abused by him to trick the woman to have sex with him. It is quite obvious that Phil is a selfish person. He will use whatever opportunity that presents for his personal gain. Phil also tries to trick Rita, his very own producer, to sleep with him which always failed. After always pursuing for mundane pleasure, Phil realizes that the things he always pursues are meaningless and only offer temporary happiness, which leads to changes in his behavior.

4.1.2.2 Minor Character

4.1.2.2.1 Rita Hanson

Rita Hanson is a new local TV station news producer in which Phil Connors worked. Rita is a nice person and everybody else thinks so except Phil. He thinks that she is dumb and naïve. He doesn't like the niceness in her and treats her with contempt. Even so, Rita doesn't give in to his hate and sarcasm.



Picture 4.7
00:04:56



Picture 4.8
00:05:30

The pictures above that were taken by using medium shot show how Rita deals with Phil's contempt. Even though he mocks Groundhog Day and people for liking blood sausage, she says that Groundhog Day is a nice event and she also likes blood sausage. Those pictures show that Rita is the polar opposite of Phil. Rita is the type of person that always kind to strangers and she loves the life in the small town of Punxsutawney. She is a clever, confident, and kind person. She loves 19th century French poetry which Phil uses to try to impress her with, but she is no fool so she does not easily fall into his trick.

Phil	: I love you.
Rita	: You love me? You don't even know me.
Phil	: I know you.
Rita	: Oh, no. I can't believe. I fell for this! This whole day has been one long setup.
Phil	: No, it hasn't.
Rita	: And I ate fudge. Yuck!
Phil	: No white chocolate, no fudge.
Rita	: What are you doing? Are you making some kind of list? Did you call my friends and ask them what I like? Is this what love is for you?

(*Groundhog Day* (1993), 00:54:43 - 00:55:03)

The dialogue between Phil and Rita above shows that Rita is not a fool and shallow person. She can read Phil's intention that he only wants to sleep with her and does not really love her, even when Phil abuses his freedom to know everything about Rita and uses that to trick her she is able to know his intention.

4.1.3 Setting

4.1.3.1 Setting of Time

The setting of time in this movie takes around February 1 and 2 during the Groundhog Day and the day before. Meanwhile, the year is late 1980s or early 1990s. This is indicated by these pictures below.



Picture 4.9
00:19:51



Picture 4.10
00:05:40

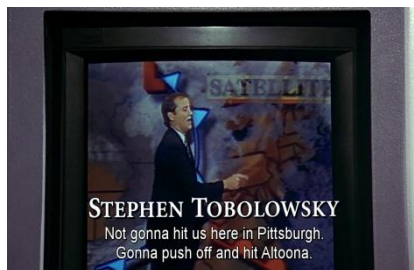


Picture 4.11
01:02:58

The first picture that was taken by using medium shot shows Phil asking a man the date of the day after realizing that he relives the same day again. The man answer it is February 2nd, which is the date of the Groundhog Day. The second picture that was taken by using long shot shows the weather van in which Phil, Rita, and Larry ride to go to Punxsutawney, the day before the Groundhog Day.

The van brand is Dodge. It is a Dodge Ram Van. The van was manufactured in 1986 as mentioned in *www.cargurus.com* in the article *1986 Dodge Ram Van Overview*. The third picture that was taken by using medium long shot shows a local inhabitant of Punxsutawney's car while chasing Phil after he kidnaps the groundhog. The car is an Oldsmobile Eighty-Eight Royale. The car was manufactured in 1992 as mentioned in *www.cargurus.com* in the article *1992 Oldsmobile Eighty-Eight Royale Overview*. Therefore, based on those pictures above it is safe to say that the setting of time in this movie takes around February 1st and 2nd, while the year is around late 1980s or early 1990s.

4.1.3.2 Setting of Place



Picture 4.12
00:01:46



Picture 4.13
00:05:42

There are only two places in which the story takes place. They are the town of Pittsburgh and Punxsutawney respectively. As shown in the first picture that was taken by using medium long shot, Phil reassures viewers that an approaching blizzard will not hit them in Pittsburgh. Meanwhile, the second picture that was taken by using long shot shows a van drives pass through a town sign. The writing on the sign says “Welcome to Punxsutawney”. Thus, based on those pictures above the writer concluded that Pittsburgh and Punxsutawney are the setting of place in the movie.

4.1.3.3 Setting of Social Environment



Picture 4.14
00:09:14



Picture 4.15
00:22:33

The setting of social environment in this movie shows life in small town of Punxsutawney. The first picture shows the simplemindedness of the town inhabitant. Mrs. Lancaster is confused when Phil asks her is there any chance he can get an espresso or cappuccino, because she only knows coffee. The second picture shows people gather at Gobbler's Knob to celebrate the Groundhog Day. It shows that people of Punxsutawney hold to their tradition firmly and believe in such superstition.

4.1.4 Conflict

4.1.4.1 Internal Conflict

There is one main inner conflict in this movie. The whole story of the movie is essentially an internal conflict. The internal conflict is experienced by Phil Connors. The inner conflict in this movie is a battle between Phil against his egoistic inner self. After he finds that he is trapped in a time loop, Phil abuses his freedom to pursue earthly pleasures, but after some time he finds that his life is mundane and lack of purpose. The void inside him becomes obvious. Phil is always filled with hate, he hates everything around him. He thinks that everyone is inferior to him and uses people for his own personal gain. This attitude is the source of his suffering.



Picture 4.16
01:00:46



Picture 4.17
01:37:43

The first picture that was taken by using medium shot shows Phil bids farewell to Rita as he is about to commit suicide. He opts for suicide as an escape from his suffering, but he continues to wake up the next day reliving the Groundhog Day again. Knowing that suicide is not an escape, Phil gradually tries to change his attitude. He dedicates his life in altruism and finds true love in Rita Hanson. The second picture that was taken by using medium long shot shows Phil asks Rita to live together in Punxsutawney, the very place he is dying to get away from. Phil eventually overcomes his egoistic inner self. Through love and altruism, he finds redemption and able to escape from the time loop. He succeeded in making the most of the present moment and finds inner peace at last.

4.1.4.2 External Conflict

There are two external conflicts that happen in this movie. The first conflict is between Phil Connors and the policemen of Punxsutawney.



Picture 4.18
00:33:08



Picture 4.19
00:32:21



Picture 4.20
00:34:31

The first picture above which was taken by using long shot shows Phil rides a car after having drinks with two townsmen. It can be seen that Phil drives the car along a railroad and a police car is on his tail. Those policemen chase Phil because he breaks the law by driving along a railroad and ramming mailboxes in which can be seen in the second picture which was taken by using medium long shot.

Phil : I'm not going to live by their rules anymore!
(*Groundhog Day* (1993), 00:33:46 – 00:33:49)

The sentence above shows Phil's response to his condition. After finding that he is doomed to repeat the same day over and over again without consequences, he abuses his freedom for the sake of his own personal satisfaction with no regard of others. This proves to be the source of the first conflict. This conflict solves with Phil's imprisonment which is shown in the third picture which was taken by using medium close-up shot.

Meanwhile, the second conflict is happened between Phil and local townsmen and policemen of Punxsutawney. The conflict is happened because Phil steals the groundhog and takes it with him as he is about to commit suicide.



Picture 4.21
01:01:21



Picture 4.22
01:02:13



Picture 4.23
01:02:08



Picture 4.24
01:04:18

The first picture above which was taken by using medium shot shows a local townsman tells the police that someone is kidnapping the groundhog. Meanwhile, the second picture which was taken by using medium close-up shot shows Phil rides a car with the groundhog on his lap. The policemen and some local townsmen chase Phil afterwards to save the groundhog which is shown in the third picture which was taken by using long shot. The scene above shows that Phil has no regards of others even in the very moment he is about to end his life. The conflict only resolves with Phil drives his car off a cliff along with the groundhog which leads to a big fiery explosion which is shown in the last picture which was taken by using long shot.

4.2 Extrinsic Aspect

4.2.1 Phil Connors' Existential Vacuum

In this movie, Phil Connors experiences existential vacuum. This feeling of emptiness is experienced by Phil after he is trapped in Groundhog Day. He tries to fill his inner void by pursuing earthly pleasures which in the end he finds those activities are mundane and lead him to nothing.

Phil : What would you do if you were stuck in one place and everyday was exactly the same, and nothing you did mattered?

(*Groundhog Day* (1993), 00:30:30 – 00:30:34)

The sentence above shows Phil expresses his feeling of emptiness. After he is trapped in Groundhog Day, he finds nothing that he does mattered. As a result, his will to meaning is frustrated. One of the most common circumstances that usually happened when the will to meaning is frustrated is the will to pleasure takes the place of the frustrated will to meaning. This is also experienced by Phil Connors and he tries to overcome this existential vacuum. There are at least two symptoms and one effect of existential vacuum that portrayed by the main character of *Groundhog Day*.

4.2.1.1 Excessive Eating

After the existential vacuum manifests itself, Phil tries to overcome this problem. The first thing that he does to deal with his existential vacuum is eating excessively.



Picture 4.25
00:35:57



Picture 4.26
00:36:10

There are two pictures above that show Phil eating excessively. The first picture was taken by using close-up shot. The picture shows us Phil's hands and a lot of food around. It was taken by using close-up shot to put emphasize on the excessive amount of food that Phil eats. Meanwhile, the second picture that was taken by using medium shot shows us Rita and Phil on the same table. Rita is expressing her worry, because Phil is eating a very large amount of food.

Rita : Don't you worry about cholesterol, lung cancer, love handles?
 Phil : I don't worry anymore.
 Rita : What makes you special? Everybody worries.
 Phil : That's exactly what makes me so special.
 (*Groundhog Day* (1993), 00:36:32 – 00:36:45)

The dialogue between Rita and Phil shows that Rita is concerned about Phil's health. Meanwhile, Phil says that he does not care about it anymore. After trapped in the time loop, Phil is doomed to repeat the same day over and over again, so he abuses his freedom to pursue earthly pleasures, in this case is excessive eating. This is all because Phil's will to meaning is frustrated and the will to pleasure takes its place up. It seems that Phil has no worry and eagerly eats his food, but this happiness is only last for short-term, it does not solve the initial problem and he still relives the same day feeling empty all over again.

4.2.1.2 Sexual Promiscuity

The second manifestation of the will to pleasure that takes the place of Phil's frustrated will to meaning is sexual promiscuity. Frankl's theory of existential vacuum mentioned that increased sexual libido is one of the consequences of the replacement of frustrated will to meaning with will to pleasure.



Picture 4.27
00:40:20



Picture 4.28
00:43:01

In this scene, Phil is having a one-night stand with Nancy, a local woman whom he just met. The first picture above which was taken by using medium shot shows Phil while kissing Nancy. Nancy is just a random woman whom Phil met at a diner in Punxsutawney. Phil approaches Nancy and tricks her to sleep with him. He even asks Nancy to marry him, but it is just his trick. Meanwhile, the second picture that was taken by using medium shot shows Phil and a woman in front of a cinema as they are about to have a movie date. It can be assumed that Phil is seeing that woman.



Picture 4.29
00:44:42

Other than those two local women, Phil also makes his advances on Rita, his own producer. The picture above which was taken by using medium shot shows Phil while he makes his advances on Rita. Phil abuses his condition in which he will relive the same day again and again to find ways to make Rita like him. He makes notes about things Rita likes and does not like. Even so, Rita is always able to see his real intention, because she is a smart woman.

Phil : This is real. This is love.
Rita : Stop saying that. You must be crazy. I could never love you because you'll never love anyone but yourself.
Phil : I don't even like myself. Give me another chance.
Rita : That's for making me care about you.
(*Groundhog Day* (1993), 00:55:03 – 00:55:26)

The dialogue above shows us a scene where Rita discovers Phil's intention. Even though she initially falls into his trick, in the end she realizes that he just wants to sleep with her. This proves that sexual promiscuity does not bring meaning to Phil's life. He is never satisfied and only achieves a short-term happiness, which only brings him more distress.

4.2.1.3 Suicide

Suicide is the act of intentionally causing one's own death. Frankl's theory of existential vacuum mentioned that there are many cases of suicide that can be traced back to this existential vacuum (Frankl, 2006: 107).

Rita : Hi, Phil.
Phil : I've come to the end of me. There's no way out now. Just remember, we had a beautiful day together once.
(*Groundhog Day* (1993), 01:00:42 – 01:00:55)

The dialogue above shows us a scene where Phil bids farewell to Rita as he is about to commit suicide. In this movie, Phil tries escape from his condition of existential vacuum by pursuing earthly pleasures but in the end he still finds that his life is not worth living for, so he opts for suicide as an easy escape.



Picture 4.30
01:04:02



Picture 4.31
01:05:39

There are two pictures above that show Phil's suicide attempts. The first picture which was taken by using medium long shot shows Phil drives his car off a cliff. Meanwhile, the second picture which was taken by using long shot shows Phil leaps off a building. All that these suicide attempts have in common is they fail. Phil still wakes up the next day reliving the Groundhog Day again and again. Therefore, it can be concluded that suicide is not a solution to Phil's problems.

4.2.2 Phil Connors' Sources of Life Meaning

After his fail attempts to overcome his existential vacuum, Phil slowly realizes that selfish attitude will never give meaning to his life. Phil tries to change his attitude and undergo these ways in his search for life meaning.

4.2.2.1 Creating a Work or Doing Deed

The first way that Phil takes to find life meaning is through creating work or doing deed. Phil Connors is an egoistic and a misanthropic man before, but those

attitudes only give him suffering. In order to overcome his suffering he gives himself to altruism.



Picture 4.32
01:23:54



Picture 4.33
01:21:08

Those pictures above show scenes in which Phil helps people of Punxsutawney. The first picture which was taken by using medium long shot shows Phil helps some old women to fix their flat tire. Meanwhile, in the second picture which was taken by using medium shot shows Phil treats a homeless man to a meal. He even gives his soup to that homeless man. This attitude is in contradiction to his former attitude. Initially, Phil really hates people of Punxsutawney because he considers himself superior to them, but later in his attempt to find life meaning he tries to love those people.



Picture 4.34
01:18:40



Picture 4.35
01:18:22

The first picture above which was taken by using medium shot shows Phil learns ice sculpting. Meanwhile, the second picture which was taken by using medium shot shows Phil takes a piano lesson. Those activities are taken by Phil in

order to overcome the ennui that is caused by existential vacuum. Ennui is the most conspicuous signs of existential vacuum and in order to overcome it one can occupy oneself by creating a work.

4.2.2.2 Experiencing Something or Encountering Someone

The second way that Phil takes to find life meaning is through experiencing something or encountering someone. The egoistic and misanthropic attitude of Phil makes him thinking that he is superior to everyone. He never really loved a woman. He only deems women as a sex object. In the movie, Phil is assigned to go to Punxsutawney with a new producer, Rita. Initially, Phil also considers Rita as a sex object, he even tries to get her to sleep with him, but through times Rita's kindness affects him.

Phil : What I wanted to say was I think you are the kindest, sweetest, prettiest person, I've ever met in my life. I've never seen anyone that's nicer to people than you are. I don't deserve someone like you. But if I ever could I swear I would love you for the rest of my life.

(Groundhog Day (1993), 01:13:20 – 01:14:28)

The sentences above show a scene where Phil confesses his love to Rita. Phil never experiences such love and never encounters a woman like Rita. That experience makes Phil becomes a different man. Phil becomes a loving and caring man. He tries to be helpful to those around him. Finally, he finds a meaning for him to live and that is his love for Rita.

4.2.2.3 The Attitude toward Unavoidable Suffering

The third way that Phil takes to find life meaning is through choosing an attitude toward unavoidable suffering. After finding that he is trapped in Groundhog Day

and doomed to relive the same day again and again he becomes infuriated. He tries to cope with his suffering through excessive eating and promiscuous sex, but those earthly pleasures do not give solution to his problem. Through times Phil experiences a lot of things, one of those life-changing experiences is his love for Rita. It affects him and changes him into an altruistic man.

Phil : When Chekov saw the long winter he saw a winter bleak and dark and bereft of hope. Yet we know winter is just another step in the cycle of life. But standing here among the people of Punxsutawney and basking in the warmth of their hearths and hearts I couldn't imagine a better fate than a long and lustrous winter.

(Groundhog Day (1993), 01:22:02 – 01:22:23)

The sentences above show a scene where Phil finally accepts his fate. After experiencing some life-changing experiences Phil chooses an attitude toward his unavoidable suffering. Phil initially really hates the town and the people of Punxsutawney, but in the end he tries and learns to love them. He realizes that there is no way he can escape his suffering so he chooses to live through it and make the most of the present.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

According to the analysis in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that Phil Connors experiences existential vacuum and get over it by finding life meaning through doing work, experiencing love, and accepting suffering. In this movie, Phil Connors experiences existential vacuum after he is trapped in a time loop. He is condemned to relive the same day over and over again. Phil tries to fill the void inside him by pursuing earthly pleasures such as excessive eating and promiscuous sex, which in the end he finds meaningless. Phil even tries to commit suicide many times because he feels that his life is not worth living, but he always failed and had to relive the Groundhog Day again.

After realizing that those earthly pleasures are meaningless, Phil undergoes these three ways to find life meaning and overcome his existential vacuum. First, Phil finds life meaning by giving himself to altruism. He tries to be helpful to those around him. He also learns to play piano and ice sculpting to overcome the boredom that is caused by existential vacuum. Second, Phil finds life meaning after his encounter with Rita, whose kindness affects him. He also falls in love with her, which also gives meaning to his life. Third, Phil finds life meaning by accepting his fate and suffering. He realizes that he cannot escape the time loop, so he tries to make the most of the present and finally finds peace.

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